(b) Agriculture being a State subject, the production and distribution of seed is the responsibility of the State Government through their Department of Agriculture, State Seed Corporations, State Seed Farms, Cooperative Agencies, Agro-Industry Corporations, Private Seed Producers etc. However, the efforts of State Government are supplemented by two national level Seed Producing Organisations like National Seeds Corporation (NSC) and State Farms Corporation of India (SFCI). As per information provided by Sunflower growing States during Zonal Seed Review meeting, which is held every year, there is no shortage of Sunflower Seed & sufficient quantity of seed was made available for distribution to the farmers.

(c) The Government is providing financial assistance under Oilseed Production Programmes (OPP) for production of Sunflower Seeds to the State Governments. The State Governments as well as seed producing agencies are producing sufficient quantity of Sunflower Seed to meet the demands of the farmers.

Falling prices of Agricultural products in Karnataka

1326. SHRI K.C. KONDAIAH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it has come to the notice of Government that due to globalization and WTO conditionalities, the prices of many agricultural products were collapsing in Karnataka; and

(b) if so, what steps are being taken by Government to protect the interests of farmers of that State, to minimize the negative affects of WTO conditionalities on farmers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) and (b) The requisite information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Growth of Agriculture Sector

1327. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that as per the recommendation of the Working Group of the Planning Commission, an investment of Rs. 736,570 crore in the farm sector would be needed during the Tenth Five Year Plan, to achieve planned growth of 4 per cent;

(b) whether Bank Policy would be amended to provide adequate credit to farmers, to achieve this target; and

(c) if so, what action Government are taking in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) to (c) The Tenth Plan Working Group on Agricultural Credit, Cooperation and Crop Insurance constituted by the Planning Commission have reported that the credit flow required in real terms to achieve the Tenth Plan growth target of 4 percent in Agriculture would be of the order of Rs. 736570 crores. Provision of credit to agricultural sector is a priority area and Finance Minister in his current year's Budget Speech has noted that the total credit flow to agricultural sector through institutional channels is expected to reach the targeted level of Rs. 64000 crores in the current year, and it is expected increase further to Rs. 75000 crores in 2002-03. A number of steps have been taken by the Government to provide increased credit to farmers. These, *inter-alia*, include the following:—

(i) Special Agricultural Credit Plan was introduced in 1994-95 under which the Banks fix targets of agricultural credit. As a result of implementation of this scheme, flow of credit to agricultural sector has increased from Rs. 8255 crores in 1994-95 to Rs. 24654 crores in 2000-01.

(ii) Specialised Agricultural Finance Branches (SAFB) by commercial Banks for promoting investment in high tech areas such as aquaculture, floriculture, pisciculture etc., have been opened. So far 61 such SAFBs have been opened by the Public Sector Banks.

(iii) Kisan Credit Card (KCC) Scheme was introduced. The number of KCCs issued upto December 31, 2001 was 2.07 crores.

(iv) Rashtriya Krishi Bima Yojana has been launched to provide a comprehensive risk insurance to encourage farmers to increase investment in agriculture.

(v) Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF) with NABARD has been set up to help the States in investing in rural infrastructure. The funds for RIDF will be enhanced from Rs. 5000 crores to Rs. 5500 crores this year (2002-03) while the rate of interest will be reduced from 10.5 per cent to 8.5 per cent.

(vi) Micro-finance Development Fund has been set up in NABARD with a corpus of Rs. 100 crores for scaling up the Self Help Group Linkage Programme and supporting other credit delivery models.

(vii) The scheme of micro credit through Self Help Groups is expected to cover 70 lakh families in the current year. The target for 2002-03 is raised to 1.25 lakh families.

(viii) Watershed Development Fund has been set up with a corpus of Rs. 200 crores with contribution of Rs. 100 each from NABARD and Government of India.

UNDRC assistance for natural disasters

1328. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the article captioned "blame it on the forces of nature", by Sunder K. Datta Ray, which appeared in the Business Standard, New Delhi dated 28th July, 2001;

(b) if so, whether India heads the list of countries, alongwith China, Hongkong and Phillipines, which are vulnerable to natural disasters;

(c) whether India has ever made a request to the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordination (UNDRC) for assistance; and

(d) if not, whether Government are thinking to make such a request now, looking to the present flood disaster in Orissa, a calamity-prone State in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) India, due to its geographical location and climate is vulnerable to various natural disasters like flood, cyclone, drought, earthquake, landslides, hailstorm and avalanches.

(c) and (d) No, Sir.

Drought relief to H.P.

1329. SHRIMATI CHANDRESH KUMARI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the total amount provided to Himachal Pradesh as drought relief during the last three financial years;